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ABSTRACT

This occasional paper, the first in a "new" series, describes the background, activities, and experiences of the Long Island Consortium, a cooperative effort of two-year and four-year colleges committed to organizing a model program of faculty development. The consortium was organized under an initial grant from the Lilly Endowment. In May and June 1974, 20 faculty from the cooperating colleges participated in a workshop which analyzed major problem areas in the teaching of history curricula, composition of the student body, teaching objectives, and teaching approaches. Each participant, working alone or in a team, undertook a specific project during the workshop--curriculum revision, the development of a simulation game, or the preparation of oral history and videotapes. Follow-up conferences were held throughout the 1974-75 academic year. As a result of participating in the program, many instructors began using new approaches and materials. Far fewer of their students dropped out of the fall semester course than had been the case in the past, and the usually large decline in enrollment in the spring semester did not occur. Moreover, the instructors reported consistently higher class attendance. "Lessons" learned from the model program experience are summarized and future plans are described. (Author/RM)

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OCCASIONAL PAPER #76-1

"A LONG ISLAND CONSORTIUM TAKES SHAPE"

by

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AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
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PREFACE

The activities of the American Historical Association History Education Project (AHA/HEP) which began in 1970 and issued an "Occasional Paper Series" devoted to the improvement of the teaching of history has expanded its original objectives and subsequently developed into a consortium of Long Island two-year and four-year colleges, and secondary school teachers, committed to the improvement of teaching and on-going faculty development.

The consortium was organized under an initial grant from the Lilly Endowment which established the American Historical Association Faculty Development Program (AHA/FDP) at Stony Brook. As of the 1976-1977 academic year the "Occasional Paper Series" will be issued under the aegis of the Stony Brook American Historical Association Faculty Development Program (AHA/FDP).

This paper, the first in the "new" series, written by Dr. William R. Taylor, Director of the Stony Brook American Historical Association Faculty Development Program presents the background of the Long Island consortium, describes the activities of the faculty development program and summarizes the "lessons" learned from the experience.

Dr. Eli Seifman
General Editor
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A cooperative effort among two-year and four-year institutions to organize a model program of faculty development

A LONG ISLAND CONSORTIUM TAKES SHAPE

In December, 1973, the American Historical Association requested the State University of New York at Stony Brook to organize a model program for faculty development in collaboration with three two-year colleges on Long Island: the State University of New York Agricultural and Technical College at Farmingdale, Suffolk County Community College and Nassau County Community College. This first year's program, funded by the Lilly Endowment and the State University of New York, is nearing its completion. It appears, furthermore, to have achieved its primary objectives--the creation of an effective, cooperative effort focused on the improvement of classroom teaching. The evaluating team appointed by the American Historical Association has called it, "a bold experiment in staff development and in interinstitutional cooperation, among faculty at two and four-year colleges."

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

From December, 1973, until May, 1974, the American Historical Association Faculty Development Program planned and organized the program, obtained financial support, recruited participants, and prepared the curriculum for the summer workshop. The Director, William R. Taylor, and Associate Director, George W. Schuyler, travelled to Washington, D.C., to consult with officers of the American Historical Association, and on one of these trips with Dr. Laura Bornholdt of the Lilly Endowment. They held formal sessions of the planning staff between January and the end of March, 1974, and numerous informal meetings. They organized meetings with the administrators of participating two-year colleges and three meetings with prospective team members from the history departments of

of these colleges. They also met several times with the Academic Vice President of the State University of New York at Stony Brook and with the Dean of the Graduate School to obtain institutional support for the American Historical Association Faculty Development Program.

In late May and early June, twenty faculty--five from each of the four cooperating institutions--participated in a workshop which analyzed major problem areas in the teaching of history curricula, composition of the student body, teaching objectives, teaching approaches, etc. Each participant, working alone or in a team, undertook a specific project during the workshop--curriculum revision, the development of a simulation game, the preparation of oral history tapes, a video tape, and so forth--which was completed as part of the program's follow-up activities. All in all, fourteen full days of workshop activities were held, two of these as part of a follow-up conference in October.

The follow-up phase of the Faculty Development Program began at the October conference when a Long Island History and Social Science Consortium was formally inaugurated to coordinate program activities during the academic year. A committee of institutional representatives has met six times since November. The Consortium Coordinating Committee, which includes the American Historical Association Faculty Development Program staff, has also organized one-day conferences at each of the participating institutions for the purpose of recruiting further faculty support. Since January, 1975, the American Historical Association Faculty Development Program staff has held weekly meetings to plan activities for the academic year, 1975-76. In addition to the above activities, there have been innumerable contacts between workshop and consortium participants.

RESULTS IN TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

The initial impact of faculty development and the small grants program for innovative teaching has been encouraging. Two of the four Stony Brook participants

are teaching a fall-spring sequence of Western Civilization courses in which they have re-evaluated their teaching and are using new approaches and materials based on their experience in the Faculty Development Program. In 1973-74, these two courses enrolled a total of 117 students. In 1974-75, they have attracted a total of 177 students, an increase of 51%. Far fewer students dropped out of the fall semester course than has been the case in the past; and the usual large decline in enrollment in the spring semester did not occur. Moreover, these instructors report consistently higher class attendance.

The change is not simply qualitative although the effect is obviously to increase the quality and effectiveness of teaching. It is equally important that instructors have begun to examine their teaching seriously and systematically; and that some have elected to teach larger, introductory courses rather than smaller, upper-level courses. And even instructors who teach small and medium size courses have demonstrated a growing interest in the art of teaching. The small grants program, which requires that proposals focus on innovative teaching, has led to an informal counselling process through which interested teachers seek out FDP staff to develop projects for which they can request support.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A $5,000 State University of New York Chancellor's award for faculty development has also helped to stimulate increased cooperation among the four participating institutions. The participating community colleges have pledged over $6,000 in matching funds for the 1975-76 academic year for faculty development activities on their campuses. The Chancellor's award has thus intensified communication, cooperation and funding for improved teaching among Albany, the State University center at Stony Brook, and the three two-year institutions.

These same institutions are now requesting support to continue to explore ways to improve teaching in history and related social sciences; and to make such efforts permanent features of the four institutions involved. This continued exploration seems especially important in the light of a decision by the American Historical Association and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to model a national program in history and the social sciences on the experience and recommendations of the Faculty Development Program initiated on Long Island last year.

"THE COMMUNITY OF PEERS"

The experience of the past year has produced some valuable lessons for the faculty of the newly-formed Long Island Consortium. One of the most critical of these lessons is that regional cooperation among institutions which share common bonds and common problems is more likely to yield success than an isolated effort. Another is that faculty development, to succeed, must have a clearly defined focus--such as a discipline, a common problem or a shared task--which cuts across institutional differences.

Faculty development programs, moreover, require provision for the continuing development of participants. One-shot conferences and workshops will not sustain activity. Institutions must plan for an on-going, adequately supported program which enables faculty to periodically renew and deepen their teaching skills. These centers of initiative would ensure that there is a focal point for faculty development on each campus where faculty are to be reached.

It is also helpful when appropriate professional organizations such as the American Historical Association can be actively involved in faculty development. Such organizations provide information on similar programs; a national outlet for the results of faculty development efforts; and the backing of a national

association for faculty development programs seeking support from their administrations.

Perhaps most important of all, we have learned, sometimes painfully, that faculty development must be organized around the principle of a "community of peers." Participants must come together as equals to explore teaching problems and planning must directly involve all participating institutions.

The Consortium has succeeded in attracting wide notice among institutions interested in initiating similar programs. A notice describing the workshop that appeared in the June A.H.A. newsletter brought forty replies and requests for information from other institutions. Copies of the A.H.A. Faculty Development Program Interim Report were sent to each institution requesting information, and additional reports and information are being distributed as they are prepared by the staff.

THE TEACHING WORKSHOP

During the second year Stony Brook, Nassau, Suffolk, and Farmingdale will begin to establish centers of initiative for faculty development on each campus and will begin to create a mechanism for continuing, effective cooperation among these centers. A program of contract fellowships will be offered to involve participants in one or several of a variety of programs.

One of these programs is a teaching workshop, semester-long, to be established among the four institutions and running throughout the year for which further support has been awarded. The purposes of the workshop are five-fold:

(1) to provide a clear "problem" focus that will serve as a hub for teachers working in diverse course contents with differing teaching philosophies;

(2) recruitment and training of new participants;

(3) further training of several first-year participants who will organize and coordinate programs at their own campuses;

(4) sponsorship of specific, problem-oriented workshops, conferences and research; and

(5) encouragement of innovative teaching through a program of small grants.

A coordinating committee, composed of faculty from each institution, will continue to provide overall policy guidance for the faculty development program and to coordinate the workshop with other activities.

The teaching workshop will begin in the fall of 1975 and will focus on a problem common to most historical and social science instructors as well as to much study in the humanities: How do we engage the interest and imagination of students in the study of cultures other than their own? What are the obstacles to the empathetic leap necessary for serious reflection upon the social and intellectual experience of other "ages," societies, or social systems? Workshop participants will pool their own experience with the problem, and call upon consultants with relevant experience in order to improve their ability to actively engage their students in historical and social science study. Twenty to twenty-five participants will participate in bi-monthly workshops during the fall and spring terms and will work on a wide range of course materials. A principal objective of the workshop will be to create a greater self-consciousness among participants concerning how one's students learn about other nations , societies, and peoples. During the fall term each meeting of the workshop will focus upon a specific facet of this complex issue, including several meetings devoted to presentations by teachers with special skills and experience who can provide

fresh perspectives on this topic.

The workshop is designed to actively involve the participants in the acquisition of knowledge of instructional skills and competencies that can be directly incorporated into their teaching. Workshop members will be organized into teams and will undertake a range of activities designed to reinforce the intellectual and methodological work of the workshop (e.g. the specifications of instructional objectives; familiarization with sources of a wide range of curricular materials; introduction to a variety of different types of teaching strategies and learning activities, etc.). These teams will visit one another's classes and hold "practical clinics" in the wake of such experience. Where teams develop interest in a particular course or particular teaching strategies they will initiate workshops designed to produce, analyze and evaluate slides, films, simulation games, and other historical teaching materials. These projects will be presented to the workshop for further discussion and evaluation. Skills workshops (i.e. films, tapes, slides, etc.) will be organized for participants who have little or no previous media experience. These skills workshops were frequently requested by last year's participants and their experience suggests that faculty who are otherwise reticent to discuss their teaching will do so willingly in the context of learning to use media in the classroom.

In the spring of 1976, participants will incorporate the work of the fall in the development and discussion of new course syllabi and curriculum materials for particular courses. The workshops and clinics will continue and in addition, faculty participants from each institution will begin to develop specific plans for teaching workshops to be held at the Suffolk, Nassau, Farmingdale and Stony Brook campuses in 1976. By the close of the semester each institution's plans will have been reviewed, evaluated and revised by the group as a whole--thereby preparing a working plan for a faculty development program on each campus.